

REMARKS

The present application has been reviewed in light of the non-final Office Action dated December 23, 2008. Claims 5, 6 and 8-11 were pending. Claims 1-4 and 7 were previously cancelled. By this Amendment, claim 10 has been amended and claim 8 has been cancelled. Accordingly, claims 5, 6 and 9-11 are now pending with claims 10 and 11 being in independent form.

In the Office Action, the rejection of claims 5, 6 and 8-11 were maintained as being allegedly unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,196,928 to Karasawa et al. (hereinafter "Karasawa") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,816,909 to Kimura et al. (hereinafter "Kimura") and U.S. Patent No. 6,466,256 to Takahashi et al. (hereinafter "Takahashi").

In Applicants' September 22, 2008 response, Applicants argued that independent claim 10 was in a form to clarify the arrangement of claim elements with respect to an image pickup system of an endoscope apparatus and an image processing unit, wherein the endoscope apparatus detachably connects to the image processing unit.

By this Amendment, the recitation to an image pickup system in claim 10 has been removed and claim 10 has been amended to clarify that the claimed endoscope imaging system comprises an endoscope apparatus and an image processing unit wherein the endoscope apparatus further comprises, inter alia, an image pickup element, a drive circuit, a frequency dividing circuit, a writing signal generating circuit, and a reading signal generating circuit.

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment to claim 10 is fully supported by the specification as originally filed and that no new matter has been added by the present Amendment.

Applicants have carefully reviewed the Examiner's comments and the cited references, and respectfully submit that independent claim 10, as presently amended, and independent claim 11 are patentable over the cited references for at least the following reasons.

In the Response to Arguments section of the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner contends:

- (i) figure 2 in Karasawa discloses that the CCD drive circuit 25a is part of the image pickup system enclosed in the scope processor 5a;
- (ii) figure 1 in Kimura discloses a reading signal generating circuit being part of the image pickup system; and
- (iii) figures 2 and 7 in Takahashi discloses a frequency dividing circuit 50 being part of an image pickup system.

Regarding item (i), figure 2 and the accompanying disclosure in Karasawa (see column 3) describes CCD drive circuit 25a as being provided within image processing unit 25 of video processor 5a. The video processor 5a is in turn connected via connectors 12a/13a to electronic scope 2a. In this configuration, CCD 24 within electronic scope 2a is provided with a drive signal sent from CCD drive circuit 25a in image processing unit 25 of video processor 5a.

Thus, contrary to the Examiner's contention, Karasawa simply does not teach or suggest a drive circuit provided within an image pickup system of an endoscope apparatus, for generating and outputting a pickup drive signal. For the same reason, Karasawa also does not teach or suggest a drive circuit provided within an endoscope apparatus, for generating and outputting a pickup drive signal, as set forth in amended claim 10.

Similarly, Karasawa does not teach or suggest a first and second drive circuit provided within an image pickup system of an endoscope apparatus, for generating and

outputting a first and second drive signal, wherein the endoscope apparatus is detachably connected to a camera control unit, as set forth in claim 11.

Regarding item (ii), figure 1 and the accompanying disclosure in Kimura describes a video endoscope system 1 comprising an electronic endoscope 11 connected via endoscope connector 18 to an electronic type endoscope controlling unit 21. Figure 1 in Kimura further illustrates a read out circuit 31 arranged within endoscope controlling unit 21.

Thus, contrary to the Examiner's contention, Kimura does not teach or suggest a reading signal generating circuit provided within an image pickup system of an endoscope apparatus, the endoscope apparatus being detachably connected to an image processing unit. For the same reason, Kimura also does not teach or suggest a reading signal generating circuit provided within an endoscope apparatus, as set forth in amended claim 10.

Regarding item (iii), figure 1 in Takahashi, describes (a) a solid state image sensor provided within flexible conduit 10 that is detachably jointed to a video processor 12 and (b) the video processor 12 outputting a group of signals to a video-signal processing device illustrated in figure 2. Frequency demultiplier 50 is described in Takahashi as being provided within a PLL circuit 42 that is further provided within the video-signal processing device.

Accordingly, Takahashi and in particular the arrangement of frequency demultiplier 50 within PLL circuit 42 does not teach or suggest a frequency dividing circuit provided within an image pickup system of an endoscope apparatus, the endoscope apparatus being detachably connected to an image processing unit. For the same reason, Takahashi also does not teach or suggest a frequency dividing circuit provided within an endoscope apparatus, as set forth in amended claim 10.

Similarly, Takahashi also fails to teach or suggest a first and second frequency dividing circuit, provided within an image pick system of an endoscope apparatus, for generating and outputting a first and second clock signal, wherein the endoscope apparatus is detachably connected to a camera control unit, as set forth in claim 11.

For the above stated reasons, Applicants submit that Karasawa, Kimura and Takahashi, taken individually or in any permissible combination, fail to teach or suggest each and every element as set forth in independent claim 10, as presently amended. Applicants further submit that Karasawa, Kimura and Takahashi, taken individually or in any permissible combination, fail to teach or suggest each and every element as set forth in independent claim 11. Therefore, claims 10 and 11 and the claims depending therefrom are patentable over the cited references.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 5, 6 and 8-11 is respectfully requested.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this application be allowed and a Notice of Allowance issued. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicant's attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Spinelli', is written over the printed name and registration number.

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